



Service-learning practices that increase civic engagement

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Summary

This research addresses high-impact service-learning practices that participants identified as having led to their increased level of civic engagement post-graduation. I will discuss my methodology and the six practices that stood out, including leadership responsibilities and a desire for continued engagement and reflection.

I conducted a qualitative multi-case case study through semi-structured interviews with four participants from three programs at the University of Michigan. Three of the participants each represented one program, and the final participant was an alumnus of all three programs.

I concluded that there were six practices that participants identified as having led to their increased levels of civic engagement post-graduation: 1) reflection and critical thinking, 2) community service, 3) community building, 4) interactions with people different from themselves, 5) leadership responsibilities, and 6) a desire for continued engagement and reflection. Some of these findings lead to obvious implications such as incorporate service-learning into both curricular and co-curricular activities and help groups form relational bonds.

Implications for practitioners regarding reflection and critical thought include engaging students in discussions that go deeper than simply surface level. Another implication is to have conversations with students on values congruence and continuing to be congruent with their values after graduation. I found implications that creating purposefully diverse communities would increase opportunities for individuals to interact with those different from themselves and tie those interactions back into their praxis through reflection. Finally, there are implications for leadership and for sustained engagement and reflection as practitioners find ways for students to continue to reflect during their time as undergraduate students and alumni to continue this reflection process after graduation.

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